

[Cowboy Life]

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Warren, Ivey G. PW

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Lubbock County

Lubbock, Texas

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pg. 1 COWBOY LIFE IN LONE CATTLE CAMPS

"I have spent most of my life on ranches," said Mart (M. F.) Driver, who is 70 years old and who is a veteran cowboy of Oklahoma and Texas cattle ranches.

"I came to Lubbock on October 1, 1906 from Oklahoma and started in to run a freight wagon between Lubbock and Big Spring. The weather was dreadfully bad that fall. We had one snow that measured 14 inches on a level. At that time the roads were so bad that, although I was driving six mules to my wagon, it took me over a month to cover my usual route, which generally required about 15 days."

"In 1909 I gave [up?] freighting and turned cowboy again." Mr. Driver continued. "I never was satisfied [unless?] I was out on a ranch looking after cows. So I got a job with R. M. Clayton and W. D. Johnson on the Muleshoe Ranch down close to Post, in Garsa County. This ranch was known in earlier days as "The Old Curry-Comb Ranch." After C. W. Post bought up this land he leased 200 sections of it to Clayton and Johnson for ranching

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purposes and they stocked it with nearly 9,000 head of cattle. This ranch was operated under the names of "Muleshoe," and the cattle were branded with a muleshoe.

"The Muleshoe Ranch headquarters were located 4 miles north of Post, but I stayed at a little one room house on the Plains. Out on the range, I believe it would be more correct if I said in the pastures, for the ranches were nearly all [fenced?] at this late a date, I was busy with the cattle and when I went to the house I was chief cook, bottle and dish washer. I lived alone and did all of my own work."

"I had company one night when I was not expecting to, an uninvited guest came in [onetime?] during the day and took possession of my bed," Mr. Driver said. "It was late and I was tired when I got home that night. I just hurried through my supper and went right to bed. I noticed a knot in the bed as soon as I lay down. I had been working pretty hard for several days and had been hurriedly spreading my bed up in the mornings, so I supposed that my blanket had become rumpled. [C12-???] 2 I turned over and stretched out on the other side of the bed. About the time I was beginning to feel pretty comfortable and dosing a little. I become conscious of slight movement somewhere in the bed. I was wide awake in a minute at that, and I lay there wondering what it could have been and waiting for some more moving, but nothing happened. I told myself that I had been mistaken and I tried to get to sleep again, but in vain. Finally I turned back over and felt for the knot, but it was gone. A little farther over I found a roll that seemed to extend in all directions across the bed, everywhere I put my hand I touched it, and it wriggled and wriggled. I threw the covers back leaped from the bed and grabbed my old oil lantern from the table, as soon as I could get a light. I went back and examined the bed. When I turned the blanket back I found a big bull snake squirming around on the mattress. The house did not have any screens and the floor was full of holes so was easy for snakes to got it. The mice were very bad there and snakes [are?] usually attracted to mice infected places. They are said to be a great [help?] in exterminating rodents, but I did not mind the mice as much as I did the snakes, however that was the only time I ever went to bed with a snake."

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"I left the Muleshoe Ranch and went to work for Ellwood on the Spade [Rnahr?] in 1914. [The?] Spade Ranch headquarters were over in Lamb County, just 6 miles north of Anton, Hackley County. This ranch had an area of about 468 square miles [????] [??????] being 9 miles wide and 52 miles long. Nothing but White Faced Faced Hereford cattle were kept on the Spade Ranch, and steer cattle was generally all that was kept on this ranch, but 1,000 cows, a large number of which were milk cows, were shipped from the dry pastures of the Ellwood Ranch, near Colorado City, in the late fall of 1917, and pastured on the Spade Ranch that winter. The cattle [?] brand was a spade. There was usually about 20,000 cattle on the ranch, but at one time taxes were paid on 35,000 head of live stock on the Spade Ranch, this list also included the saddle horses."

"I worked on the Spade Ranch 14 years." Mr. Driver continued. "Sometimes I was 3 punching cattle and sometimes I was repairing windmills. There were 50 windmills on the ranch and for two years I spent most of my time keeping those mills up."

"Some men do not like to batch, they complain of getting lonesome, but I never was that way. I never cared for any kind of games, or dances. I never cared for a lot of company. I liked the camp life, liked being alone with just a big herd of cattle, I lived my myself in a little house for [?] years, while I worked on this ranch. It sure seemed like home to me."

"There was one time though when I was mighty glad to have some of the other boys come along," Mr. Driver sated. "That was just after that big blizzard in 1918. I was in camp by my self looking after the cattle that had been shipped from Colorado City. When that blizzard struck, I had 26 calves, with this bunch of cows, to [a?] take care of. The calves ranged from 2 weeks down to 3 days old, the poor little things just looked as if they would freeze when the wind first hit them. I hitched up to the wagon and drove down in the pasture, everytime I saw a calf I turned my team in among [?] cattle until I was close enough to lasso the calf, then I pulled it up in the wagon. I got all of them and hauled them to the house where I could give then better care and they were protected from the cold there. I went to feeding them on alfalfa hay, cotton seed meal and bran. I raised all of these calves

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but one, and they never had another drop of milk [adter?] I hauled them home that day. It did not take them long to learn to eat and they got along fine by themselves.

“About the time I got the calves all up I began to suffer with my head and face. My jaws went to aching until I could hardly stand it when I went out in the wind, but I had to see about the cows. Some of them were going lame and getting down in the pastures with their feet and legs frozen. I kept going out and doing what I could, but I know that I could [not?] keep it up much longer and I hoped that some of the other boys would come to my camp. None of them showed up [howeber] and after about four or five days I got a chance to send in word that I needed help, [?] by a passer-by and the next day assistance arrived. Tom Arnett came and brought me back to town. My face was swollen 4 and paining me so badly that I [wanted?] to have my teeth extracted. I went to Dr. [?]. M. Ballinger first, but he would not pull my teeth, so I went to Dr. M. [O?]. Overton. He tole me that he felt sure that my [gums?] would have to be treated before any extractions could be made, but he advised me to go to Dr. R. B. Hutchinson. This dentist treated my mouth for some time, and finally pulled all of my teeth.”

“We lost a good many cows from the effects of the blizzard. We put the ones that had gotten down in the pastures on a slide and had [tien?] pulled up to the corral where we could [treat?] them. Some of them died in a little while. None of them ever got over it, the ones that lived to get up again just hobbled around on their frippled feet and looked miserable. When the [weather?] befan to get warm their legs broke out in scores and some of then got down again. The flies began to be got terribly bad around the corrals. At last along in May we just killed the poor creatures, there was were 11 of them when we made the slaughter.

“When the Ellwood lands were put on the market and sold for farms, a number of the old cowboys were let out, and so after 14 years on the Spade Ranch, I fould myself without a job. There were several of the other boys who were on the ranch long time that had to go too. I worked with [K?]. Arnett, he is dead now, and Sam Delmont, he was there 15 or 17

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years, he works on the A. [B?]. Ranch at [Lemesa?] now. Then Edd Forts was with us too, he runs a filling station at Lovelland.

"I come to town and bought me a home and got married," Mr. Driver said with a twinkle in his eyes. "I go out every fall and work for Len McClellan on the Circle Bar Ranch for a month or two during the round up. I cook and run the [chuck?] wagon, while the boys brand the new calves, and get things in shape around the ranch for the winter."

Mr. Driver glanced out the window at the snow, it was a cold, ugly day outside, then he leaned back in his easy chair and playfully tweedled the ears of his devoted dog. Who was curled up cat like fashion in his master's lap. On the other side of the stove in a little wicker rocking chair sat the old cowboys wife - a perfect picture of cheerful contentment, and one knows that when Mr. Driver can no longer make trips out to the 5 ranches that he will be spending long, happy hours recounting his experiences as a cowboy to the attentive lady of his choice as she listens quietly and rocks in her wicker chair. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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